

Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management

INCOMING GOVERNMENT BRIEF

TOPIC: Budget Efficiencies (Vacancy Control)

Current situation

- The Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management's (DPFEM) Vacancy Management Committee (VMC) was formed in July 2022 to oversee state service employee costs, establishment management and vacancy filling practices; and the progress of strategies in these areas that drive transformation.
- The VMC comprises of the Executive Director, People and Business Services; Director, People and Culture; Manager Finance and Payroll Services; and Manager Partnering and Employment Services.

Key facts

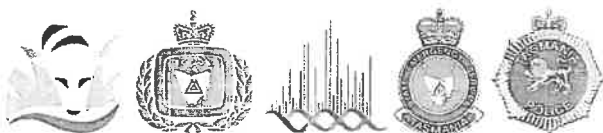
- Activities in scope of the VMC include review of all newly proposed state service positions; proposals to vary establishment; and all proposals to fill currently established state service positions via any method (for example advertising, expression of interests, more responsible duties allowances, or higher duties allowances).
- The VMC first met on 15 July 2022 and has met on a weekly basis or out of session if required. As of 19 March 2024, the VMC has met 88 times.
- As at 29 February 2024, DPFEM's total FTE is 2561.9, comprising:
 - 509.9 FTE in TFS;
 - 47.02 FTE in SES;
 - 1,656.79 FTE in Tasmania Police (including sworn officers and State Service Employees); and
 - 348.19 FTE in Business and Executive Services (BES).
- On average, at any one point in time the Department has 71 state service vacancies in some form of active recruitment.
- The average number of requests that the VMC considers is approximately 20-25 per week.

Challenges and opportunities

- Oversight by a centralised committee adds an additional level of rigour to approval processes and provides for vacancy filling proposals to be strategically and consistently reviewed to ensure alignment with DPFEM priorities, sound financial strategy and consideration of efficiencies and or redeployment of employees.

Action required by Government

- N/A



Background

- VMC was formed at a point where DPFEM was entering a tight financial operating environment. While Budget announcements in 2022-23 highlighted continued investment in front line resources, the impact of continued cost pressures on core goods and services, including increased workers compensation premiums, petrol prices and inflationary impacts on supplies were considered significant.
- In response, a range of strategies and opportunities were explored across DPFEM to drive efficiency and lean processes; and to identify different ways of undertaking business that could result in savings for DPFEM. As part of this, it was identified that salaries make up a significant proportion of DPFEM's budget.
- The purpose of the VMC is to:
 - Provide a forum to make informed decisions based on the provision of strategic information.
 - Consider and approve for filling state service employee vacancies employed under the *State Service Act 2000* and variations to establishment that are deemed essential to business operations of the Department and therefore continue to be required (determination to be made in line with existing whole of DPFEM priorities).
 - Monitor state service establishment budget vs actuals, identify areas of concern and strategies to address overruns.
 - Monitor current vacancy filling, recruitment patterns and establishment management practices to identify opportunities for transformation that may result in savings or drive more efficient and lean processes.

